

## **BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

### **REGULAR MEETING**

**Monday, May 8, 2000**

Present: June Bailey, James Johnston, Joe McLeland, M.S. Mitchell, Trix Niernberger, Leon Robinson, and William Sanders

Also Present: Tim Austin – Austin Miller PA; Earl G. Powell, Real Estate Broker; Blaise Plummer, Law Department; Jan Long and Chris Brietenstein, Public Works Department; and Larry Hoetmer, Doug Kupper, Janice McKinney, and Maryann Crockett (Staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meetings of March 13, 2000, and April 11, 2000, were reviewed and approved.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Clarification on How to Handle Off Agenda Items.** Blaise Plummer, Law Department, commented that Board By-Laws and Robert's Rules of Order govern Park Board meetings. He said some of the reasons for considering off agenda items were emergencies, items that came up between when the agenda was mailed and the meeting date and simply neglecting to put an item on the agenda. He said the Board may take up off agenda items by a two-thirds majority vote, or unanimous consent, to suspend the rules and take up the off agenda item. He clarified that the subject of the off agenda item should be included in the motion. In addition, he said the motion to suspend the rules must be seconded, that it was not debatable or amendable, and if the motion was defeated, it could not be raised again at the same meeting.
- **Vacant lots on University.** Requested by Joe McLeland. Director Kupper stated that he had received information from Property Management that the site had been re-platted into two lots and that the price had been raised from \$119,000.00 to \$149,000.00.

McLeland responded that he had spoken with two different people at Mennonite Housing and they indicated that no one from the City had contacted them regarding the lot(s). He said the individuals he spoke to thought Mennonite Housing was open to discussion and that a possible land trade was also mentioned. Director Kupper stated that he would contact Property Management and advise Mr. McLeland so he can determine if this subject should be addressed once again at next month's meeting.

### **AGENDA**

1. **Discussion of Lincoln Park/Busing for Pools.** Requested by Joe McLeland. Director Kupper referred the item to Janice McKinney, Acting Director of Recreation. McKinney stated that the City had agreed to bus neighborhood children to other swimming pools for swimming lessons for a period of one year after Lincoln Park pool was closed for

construction of the new water feature. She said that the first year both neighborhood and Latch Key program children were bused to other pools at City expense. She said the second year, the busing program was suspended by the City due to lack of participation. She commented that the South Central Recreation Initiative did provide some busing service the second year, but that they were no longer in operation. She said there were no funds in the City Recreation budget to provide busing service, and provided a cost estimate of \$60.00 a day or approximately \$3,000.00 for the ten week summer.

McLeland commented that it was unbelievable that it has taken three years to get the Lincoln Park water feature completed. He said last year the neighborhood was told that busing would be provided, and he felt that the City owed those people something. Bailey asked how many kids were bused last year. McKinney responded that no children were bused by the City. Niernberger asked if the City could come up with the money? There was brief discussion concerning what could be done to remedy the situation. Niernberger asked if the Latch Key program was non-profit? McLeland said it was a non-profit organization.

Director Kupper commented that the City could take a look at it; however, he said part of the \$70.00 per week the City charged Summer of Discovery (SOD) program participants included fees for field trips and other associated costs. Mitchell suggested the Board attempt to find a private subscriber to fund the cost of transporting children to a pool two to three days per week. Bailey requested that all neighborhood children be included in the proposed busing program, not just the Latch Key children.

McLeland requested the completion date for the Lincoln Park water feature. Director Kupper said between 90 – 120 days after the bid was let. McLeland requested that a status report be provided at the July meeting.

2. **Request for Temporary/Permanent Easements – Cessna Park.** Requested by Public Works. Jan Long, Public Works, began the presentation by explaining that the requested permanent sewer easement was Phase 3 of the War Industry Relief Sewer to the existing sewer system in the south part of the City. She commented that Phase 1 of the project had been completed, that Phase 2 was currently under construction and that Phase 3 was scheduled to begin in late fall. She stated that the four temporary easements were for construction purposes only and that the thirty-foot permanent sanitary sewer easement was for the sanitary sewer from Cessna Park, north to Mt. Vernon. She said the project will not be “open trench boring”, but will be excavated and drilled from manhole to manhole. She said the manholes will be open for approximately two weeks and that the contractor will be responsible for security.

Director Kupper clarified that there were monies designated in the construction fund to re-landscape the area. Long confirmed that funds to landscape and repair the bike path were included in project costs. There was general discussion concerning whether the project would disturb baseball/softball league play at the park, malicious mischief to the manhole covers, project staging and equipment storage, thirty foot right-of-way easement versus the forty foot trench and possible structural failure.

On motion by McLeland, second by Sanders, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the temporary and permanent easements through Cessna Park.

3. **Discussion of Disposition of Kingsbury land adjacent to Brooks Landfill.** Requested by City Council. Director Kupper briefly introduced the item stating that the City Council had developed a "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for the site and that two responses had been received. He introduced Tim Austin from Austin Miller PA.

Mr. Austin began his presentation by providing board members a copy of the proposal and concept map from Kingsbury Communities, Inc., whom he said was the designated preferred developer of the site. He said the advantages of the Communities proposal were that it would allow the City to recover its investment in the Kingsbury land (to perhaps be used to fund future development of the Brooks, Garvey and Chapin sites), it would return the land to the City's tax rolls, and it would provide high quality housing and a golfing community with lakes, walkways and parks in the north western part of the City. He said Communities proposed to pay the City approximately \$1.2 million for the property. He said it was a multi-phased project that would begin with the closure of Brooks Landfill. He concluded by saying that the plan was a concept only and that it could be changed to adapt to the community's needs.

Earl G. Powell, Real Estate Broker, provided board members a copy of a proposal re: Vic Eisenring which was an offer of \$950,300 less a credit of \$300,300 for dismissal of the appeal in City of Wichita v. Eisenring, Case No. 99-83919-S. Briefly, the proposal suggested removal of sand and gravel from the property, tie-in concepts for senior citizens with proposed Via Christi Campus on Ridge Road and possible repurchase of any portion of the property by the City for fair market value. An alternative suggested was exchange of the Southwest portion of the Kingsbury track in exchange for dismissal of the appeal.

There was discussion regarding Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) concerns about sand extraction and development of the Brooks site, a proposal for sale of methane gas, sand percolation, required county and state permits, and retention of river access.

Director Kupper said several alternatives for consideration were outright sale of the site, retaining the property and leasing out sand extraction rights, or retaining the property for future park purposes. Mitchell reminded the Board that development of Brooks was limited due to it being a former sanitary landfill. Director Kupper said the Board also needed to consider costs and other issues associated with development and maintenance of 750 acres of parkland. He said even if the site was not developed in the near future, site maintenance would still be an issue.

McLeland said he did not think he had enough information to make a decision at this time. He also mentioned the possibility of the City developing a municipal golf course on the site. Mitchell suggested the possibility of developing a "Watson Park" type facility. Bailey reminded the Board that the City owned the site. She suggested deferral of a recommendation until board members actually inspected the site. Johnston said "for the record" he would never support selling the property if it can be reserved for future park use. Sanders said he thought the City should sell the site, that the City owned too much land already.

On motion by Bailey, second by Robinson, IT WAS VOTED to defer action on the Kinsbury site until the June meeting. Motion passed 5-2. Bailey, McLeland, Mitchell, Niernberger, Robinson – Yeah. Johnston and Sanders – Abstained.

4. **Acquisition of land at Seneca and K-96 for the purpose of providing Adult Soccer Fields.** Director Kupper briefly reviewed the item stating that a 14-acre site had been located on the south side of K-96 by the Seneca Street bridge. He commented that an adult soccer league had been displaced from Schell Park because of high use and conflicts with the surrounding neighborhood. He said the league was currently playing at 37<sup>th</sup> St. and Ohio, which was a temporary location with terrain not particularly well suited for soccer play. He said the 14-acre site provided enough open space for two to three soccer fields, land for construction of adequate parking facilities and ground for a display of flowering trees along K-96. He said the price of the land was .22 cents per square foot, which equated to approximately \$149,000.

There was brief discussion concerning multiple use of the area, discussion with the soccer league, impact of increased traffic on the neighborhood, length of time needed to develop the soccer fields, the possibility of obtaining grant monies from the U.S. Soccer Association and equity in dealing with other user groups.

On motion by Johnston, second by Bailey, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City purchase the land.

5. **Update on Summer of Discovery (SOD) Program.** Requested by June Bailey. Director Kupper referred the item to Janice McKinney, Acting Director of Recreation. McKinney commented that registration for the SOD program was going well. She said each site had the capacity for 96 participants and mentioned that several sites were already almost full. She briefly reviewed registration at several sites. She said the Department had originally received \$100,000 in Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) monies; however, that had been increased by \$30,000. She said there was also the possibility of receiving an additional \$70,000 to help serve children in the community who could not afford to participate in the program without financial assistance. She said Recreation staff was currently firming up plans for field trips, contracts with program instructors and other details. Director Kupper commented that program advertisements had been printed in Spanish this year and registration had been moved to the Recreation Centers, which staff felt helped improve citizen accessibility.

Bailey asked if the collection problem had been resolved. McKinney responded that a \$25 non-refundable deposit had been established. She also mentioned that four registration categories had been created which were full pay, \$35 fee, \$10 fee and no charge. She concluded by saying that Recreation staff was really excited about this year's program. Bailey stated that Recreation staff should be commended for the fine job they have done.

6. **Department of Park and Recreation Restructuring.** Requested by City Council. Director Kupper referred board members to the City Council Agenda Report and Council Proceedings dated 5/2/00 provided with the Park Board agenda. He briefly reviewed the item stating that the City had been advertising for a Recreation Director as well as a Grounds Maintenance Supervisor. He said park and recreation facilities are spread throughout the entire City, which required a lot of time travel time from one facility to another ("windshield time"). He

said the proposal was to bi-sect the City north and south along Kellogg (U.S. 54). He said acreage, recreation centers and swimming pools were approximately equal along this east/west axis.

Director Kupper continued by saying that part of the proposal was to create two Parks and Recreation Superintendent positions, one for each area, which would deal with both programming and maintenance issues. He said that would eliminate scheduling conflicts as well as have one information source that could answer questions concerning both programming and maintenance. He said in addition to the two superintendent positions, the proposal requested upgrading the Administrative Assistant to the Director position to an Assistant to the Director. He said that position would coordinate financial management, report functions, budget, personnel and research and cost analysis. Finally, he said the Landscape and Forestry section of the Department would take on the additional responsibility of overseeing facility construction and repair, with particular emphasis to providing basic maintenance support functions in the downtown area.

Bailey said she wanted to go on record as saying that she did not appreciate the process that allowed this issue to be presented to the City Council prior to being presented to the Park Board for input and feedback.

There was general discussion concerning the proposed restructuring. Bailey asked if current staff would be replaced or would they be given the opportunity to apply for the created positions? Director Kupper said staff would be given the opportunity to apply for the positions. He also mentioned that previous applicants for both positions were being contacted to see if they were still interested, since some of the applications were over a year old. Bailey asked about the duties of the Program Development Coordinator and to whom they would report. Director Kupper responded that the Program Development Coordinator would work on special projects such as grant applications, foundation research and other special needs. He commented that they would report directly to him. Bailey questioned the ability of the Landscape and Forestry Division to oversee construction and maintenance projects in addition to their current responsibilities. She asked for further details on assignments in the downtown area. Director Kupper explained that the Landscape and Forestry division would concentrate on the highly visible areas in the downtown "core" area such as the Library, Century II, Old Town, Omnisphere, etc. Bailey asked how mowers and other maintenance equipment were going to be divided? She also asked about the mowing schedule and how that would be effected. Director Kupper said equipment would be almost evenly split and that the fourteen-day mowing rotation would be maintained.

McLeland asked if there would be any increase in Department personnel? Director Kupper indicated that the basic number of jobs would not increase. McLeland asked about contingency plans for equipment breakdowns. Director Kupper explained that it was his job to make sure the City was covered, even if it required sharing equipment with Public Works, Water or leasing equipment from a private vendor. McLeland wondered about additional details of the proposal. Director Kupper commented that the superintendents and other staff would work out the details of the plan.

Niernberger commented that she saw the Park Board's role as policy and advisory to the Department and it looked like the restructuring proposal would make the Department more responsive to neighborhoods and citizens who use parks. Director Kupper explained that he

was trying to provide “one-stop shopping” which included development, programming and maintenance.

Johnston commented that high quality park maintenance was needed and referenced an incident at Sim Golf Course. Mitchell said as far as the overall idea of putting more responsibility in fewer places (his experience was the more you can do that the better), he said that wasn't going to solve the problem that people expect better park maintenance. He said it was going to be up to the Board to support staff; however, the Board also needs to look at the fact that the Park and Recreation Department needs more staff, equipment and money to provide better maintenance. He said if and when the Board gets the opportunity to participate in the budget process, they needed to do enough research to be effective in getting that done. Bailey commented that she felt the Department should use the people that they already have to fill the newly created positions and not displace people

On motion by McLeland, second by Johnston, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the restructuring concept proposed by the Park and Recreation Director.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.

---

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

---

Maryann Crockett, Clerk